



Funeral in Mill Road for ferry victims, 1905

170.63

Cambridge CEMETERIES Chronicle

1898

1898 10 19

Mr Dixon said that Mill Road cemetery was always locked up on Sundays, because, if not, swarms of little children rampaged about over the graves; and while he was conducting a funeral it was very annoying to have some little urchins come up and say, "Oh, my! Ain't that a little coffin!". The children jumped about over the graves, while labourers going to work made the cemetery a thoroughfare. The matter was giving the committee a great deal of trouble. 1898 04 13

1898 Sir - for many years I have constantly visited the Mill road cemetery, Cambridge, and feel quite certain that if the present cemetery were made into a general and open place of burial it would last for many years. When the time arrives to provide a new cemetery, why not use that which is situated on the Huntingdon Road, which has a field adjoining sufficient to make a very large cemetery. I know that the Castle End hill is an obstacle, but an extra horse could be used to assist in drawing the hearse over this spot. This would be far preferable to going through Barnwell – R.R
CDN 1898 10 19

1899

1899 06 02

The custodian of the Mill Road cemetery, Cambridge, Thomas Stanbridge, said he saw the defendants approaching with a handcart containing a headstone. There was a funeral taking place against the entrance gate so endeavoured to prevent them from entering the cemetery. In so doing he was pushed right under one of the coaches attending the funeral and got his leg fixed between the wheel and a headstone. He called out and the people at the funeral were disturbed by his remarks. Then the defendant stuck him under the chin, and threatened to pull his beard out 1899 06 02

1899 12 23

While making excavations at the junction of City Road and Fitzroy Street some workmen in the employ of the Cambridge Electric Lighting Company came upon some gruesome remains. They dug up some coffins. It is supposed the site is that of the old burial ground of Eden Street chapel. The remains were removed to Mill Road cemetery, where they were interred. For some reason efforts are being made to prevent the real facts becoming known. The employees of the Electric Light jealously guard what they deem an important secret, and refuse to give any details - 1899 12 23

1900

1900 11 28

An Inspector of the Local Government Board held an inquiry at Cambridge Guildhall with reference to the application of the Town Council to borrow £15,500 for the provision of a new cemetery at a spot near Fen Ditton. Dr Cooper said there was a good deal of talk and it was of the utmost importance to the inhabitants that the formation of the new cemetery would not in the slightest degree be of risk to the purity of the water supply of the town CDN 1900 11 28

1901

1901 10 09

Yarmouth Guardians received a report on the dissection of paupers' bodies. They had been sent to Cambridge by officials of the workhouse since 1881. Professor Macalister sent a cheque for £6 14s 6d for each body but only £5 10s 0d was really incurred for expenses. The railway charge for the carriage of a body was £4 6s.0d but the Master's clerk said it was £4 9s.0d and that he put the other 3s. in the poor box. £1 was paid for a coffin but he received 1s. from the undertaker. All the clerk had to do was to see the body was screwed down, go to the railway station and pay the charge. He said he gave the porters sixpence each but inquiry proved they only received a pint of beer. CDN 1901 06 13

1901 Cambridge Guardians heard that a coffin had been supplied by the undertaker minus the plate and the funeral had had to be postponed. The people concerned had a desire to avoid, as far as possible, what might be termed a pauper funeral and were willing to pay half the expense. The coffin should be provided by the parochial authorities but the relative wanted it made by someone other than the man who did the work on behalf of the Union because, with some of that pride which they had seen so frequently exemplified by paupers, they wanted to escape the eyes of Mrs Grundy. That had probably led to a little friction with the undertaker CDN 1901 10 09

1901 11 25

The funeral of Mr C.F.G. Stanhope, who was better known by the stage name of Mr Charles Gervase, under which he played the part of Harry Bronson in Mr W. Greet's "Belle of New York" Company, took place at Mill Road Cemetery. The deceased actor contracted typhoid fever whilst at Cambridge and died at Addenbrooke's Hospital. The interment took place in the presence of a large number of persons who showed deep sympathy with the mourners 01 11 25

1902

1902 05 10

The funeral of P.C. Thompson of the Cambridge police was conducted on military lines. His comrades, accompanied by members of the Borough Fire Brigade, marched to Sturton Street. As the coffin was brought out of the house the police band played the death march in "Saul" and Drum Major Inspector Johnson, his staff draped with crepe, led the hearse & mourning coaches in procession to Mill Road cemetery. The route was lined by people and many were the manifestations of sympathy with the mourners. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr Ellis Merry 02 05 10

1903

1903 06 03

The new municipal cemetery, which Cambridge Corporation has prepared on Newmarket Road, was opened for interments. In anticipation of the time when the general public will regard burial more from a sanitary than from a sentimental point of view, a part of the ground adjoining Ditton Lane has been reserved for the erection of a crematorium. The first interment was a child named Alfred Willet Whitmore; the coffin was borne by six young ladies and Mr Ellis Merry was the undertaker. 03 06 03

1903 07 28

Sir - An exciting scene occurred at 11.30 pm when the small-pox hearse was just reaching its destination and turning round previous to receiving the body of a young man who had died that morning. The night was very dark and the hearse overturned on its side, the smashing of glass and the bumping of the vehicle on the road causing a great commotion. After some delay it was righted again, the body duly deposited inside and it rumbled and groaned off to the cemetery, grating on the road with its iron-shod wheels in the dead of the night in a most unpleasant manner. Any private firm would have an India-rubber tyred vehicle for such work but Cambridge Corporation have apparently yet to discover that such 'luxuries' exist - 'Mill Road' 03 07 28

1903 11 21

A growing demand for the stone, marble and granite objects with which the memory of the dead are perpetuated indicates an expansion of business for those who provide these melancholy tokens. Messrs Ivett and Reed have found their premises on Mill Road and Regent Street inadequate and have opened a new branch on Newmarket Road, appropriately near the new cemetery. The premises consist of a dwelling house and show-room and are built of Bath stone with a portico supported by two graceful Corinthian pillars. Inside is a chimney-piece of statuary marble upon which delicate-looking foliage is represented in the Italian style. 03 11 21

1903 12 19

Cambridge Cheap Funeral Furnishing. Polished Elm Coffin, Glass Hearse, 2 Carriages, Bearers, and Attendance complete £5 5s. - C. Osler, Mawson Road. Glass Hearse and Pair, with rubber tyres, 7s.6d. Brougham with single horse, 5s. No extra charge for Black Plumes or Velvets if required. Coffins finished and delivered in two hours if required. Guaranteed five per cent cheaper than anyone else - Ellis Merry, Abbey Walk [Adverts] 03 12 19

1904

1904 05 18

The placid life of Linton has been stirred by a rumour that the dead body of a pauper had been sold by the Master of the Workhouse to the Cambridge School of Anatomy. This was a perfectly lawful proceeding under the Anatomy Act which provides that the bodies of unclaimed paupers may be used for scientific study. The matter had been debated by the Board of Guardians who voted five for and five against but the Chairman declined to give the casting vote. The Master had taken it upon himself to send the body to Cambridge. But it was not 'sold'. 1904 05 18

1904 05 19

Cambridge cemetery committee considered whether to close the whole of the Mill Road burial ground. They had asked the various incumbents as to the number of grave spaces allotted to their parishes and whether it was possible to identify the graves of all persons buried there. It appeared to be dependent on the knowledge of the sexton and there was no way of identifying the position of each grave. There should be a public enquiry. But there were many timid widows who had husbands buried there and would like to be buried there too who would not go to an enquiry. Alderman Kett agreed: he would like his bones to be laid there and had six or seven unoccupied spaces for members of his family. What would an inspector care about such sentiments. He would be overruled by those fanatics of sanitary improvement. 04 05 19

1904 07 05

An inquiry into the proposed closure of Mill Road cemetery, Cambridge heard objections from several parishes. The All Saints portion would not be absolutely full for another 23 years and was as sanitary as any other. There were 142 spaces available for Holy Sepulchre and 120 for St Paul's parish which was strongly opposed to closure. The Rev E.C. Pearce of St Bene't's said there were 60 vaults and brick graves likely to be used again; he had never seen remains exposed when a new grave had been made. At St Edward's there had been 47 interments in the last 10 years, 23 of which were

not parishioners and had no right to burial in the ground & there was space for another 120 graves. But St Michael's parish only had space for 50 - 1904 07 05

1904 08 25

The Local Government Board have decided to close those parts of Mill Road cemetery which are assigned to the parishes of St Andrew the Less, St Mary the Less and St Botolph but say there is no need for the protection of public health for other areas to be closed. The three portions will be sealed while in the rest of the burial ground interments will continue as usual. This is in accordance with the deep feelings expressed at the inquiry where representatives of the other parishes had protested strongly against their grounds being closed, with the single exception of the Rev Wood who was acting in direct opposition to the wishes of his parishioners. His 'aesthetic' vapourings were appreciated by the Inspector for their true worth. 04 08 25

1905

1905 05 16

A Cambridge lady has patented a coffin to minimise the possibility of premature burial. It contains an electric bell, the button of which is fixed near the hand of the occupant with the bell on the top of the grave. There is also a glass plate in the lid together with a hammer to allow the person to break out, though it is hardly conceivable that anyone would have sufficient strength to scramble to the surface 05 05 16a

1905 07 18

The new Cambridge cemetery on Newmarket Road is nothing less than a small farm with oats, wheat and barley covering over 20 acres. As yet very few interments have taken place and years must elapse before graves encroach upon a great expanse of the site which would otherwise be lying unproductive. The crops have a very promising appearance and will produce a profit for ratepayers 05 07 18a & b

1908

1908 02 22

Cambridge Guardians discussed the case of an old soldier who had served in the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny for whom they paid 2s 6d a week for a nurse. The old man had saved £20 out of his pension to pay for his funeral expenses, so that he should not be buried in a pauper's grave. But this had been seized by the relieving officer. They did not want the old man to have the money back so that his children should have the pleasure of spending it for their own comfort and then send him to the Union 08 02 22a

1908 04 16

Newmarket Road cemetery was too expensive, ratepayers claimed. The land had cost four times what adjacent ground had fetched, the walls were crumbling and the cottage built of the poorest bricks so the papers hung in strips inside. There were four greenhouses and a kind of chapel where part of the service was held – all of which had to be heated. A number of beds had been planted with bulbs and expensive flowers whereas herbaceous plants would do quite well. A number of people visited on a Sunday bringing children who played in the open space, but it should not be a recreation ground. 08 04 16

1909

1909 01 15

On Friday night a man died in an East Road Lodging House and the landlady was naturally anxious to relieve her house of the body at the earliest moment. She had no knowledge of the man's relatives and a 'parish burial' was ordered. The undertaker said she had wanted to put the body in the yard covered up with clothes but he had removed it at his own expense. But relatives complained that the coffin was too small and the body laid on bare wood with the feet sticking to the pitch. All there was to cover him was a piece of thin stuff which did not meet in the middle CWN 09 01 15

1909 02 19

Please make what use of this you may. Kindly remember where it came from – www.mikepetty.org.

The gallant band of old soldiers who fought in the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny gets smaller every year. Cambridge man James Gray died in the workhouse, where the poor are so well looked after and was buried at Mill Road cemetery. There was no time to arrange for a military funeral but Captain Heal sent a large Union Jack to be placed on the coffin. Four members of the Territorial Force volunteered to act as pall bearers but assembled at Newmarket Road cemetery. On realising their mistake they drove to Mill Road which they reached just after the sorrowful ceremony had concluded and the mourners had left 09 02 19

1909 05 14

Two spinsters, aged 50 and 30, appeared in court charged with stealing carnations value sixpence from a grave in Mill Road cemetery. The custodian said he saw them take the flowers from the side of the grave of Trooper Truscott; he took the ladies to his house, locked the door and sent for a policeman. They were respectable Sunday school teachers who had known the deceased well and picked up flowers that had dropped from a wreath to take home and press in remembrance of him. The custodian was legally correct but for him to lock them up, send for a policeman and cart them through the streets to the police station was very regrettable 09 05 14

1909 11 19

Frederic William Hodgson carried on the business as plumber and decorator for nearly 30 years. He was a life-long abstainer and the oldest Deputy Grand Worthy Patriarch of the Cambridge Sons of Temperance, having cycled some thousands of miles whilst engaged in propaganda work. The sad cortege proceeded from his house in Peas Hill to Mill Road cemetery where the first part of the funeral service was conducted in the chapel. The coffin was borne by fellow members of friendly societies. 09 11 19

1912

1912 10 18

Cambridge Medical Schools recently applied to Chelmsford Guardians for unclaimed bodies of paupers for dissecting purposes. These are indispensable for the education of a surgeon. Prof Courtney Kenny refutes the belief that a person has no legal right to bequeath his own body for anatomical examinations. If he directs that after death his body shall be examined anatomically then the person having lawful possession of the corpse shall direct such an examination to be made. However the deceased relatives can require the body to be interred without such examination 12 10 18i

1914

1914 10 16

Two military funerals took place from the First Eastern General Hospital at Trinity College. One body was sent in a coffin wrapped in a Union Jack to the station and put on a train to Durham. The railway expenses were generously defrayed by Nurse Keep. The funeral of other, Arthur Larkin of the Royal Scots, was held at Newmarket Road cemetery. He'd been wounded at Mons and the cause of death was tetanus. Bugler Royston sounded the 'Last Post' 14 10 16

1915

1915 11 26

Newmarket Road cemetery worked at a loss – 11 acres under cultivation by permanent staff; other cemeteries were few but graves were being used by other members of family 15 11 26 p5

1916

1916 03 22

John Robert Peck funeral at Mill Road Cemetery. He was sexton at St. Andrew's the Less for about 29 years. It was impossible to visit the cemetery without seeing Mr. Peck, and having been there for so many years he knew the situation of every grave. Six of the sextons from other churches offered to act as bearers 16 03 22 CIPof

1916 08 23

Mill Road Cemetery lamentable condition of a considerable part of the Mill Road Cemetery under the jurisdiction of the parish of Christ Church. The whole area is a howling wilderness with grass reaching to a tall man's waist. We appreciate the labour and other difficulties which have to be encountered at this time and we are prepared to make reasonable allowances, but the present state of things in the Christ Church portion of Mill Road Cemetery is past all excuse 16 08 23 CIP0f

1917

1917 06 13

Crosses erected over graves of those died in service buried at Newmarket Road cemetery – photo – 17 06 13a

1922

1922 04 221

Impressive scenes were witnessed at the funeral of an Indian undergraduate. The funeral was carried out according to the Mohammedan ritual, and the interment was at St Giles' cemetery, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge. The coffin was conveyed in a hearse and was followed on foot by over 50 Indian undergraduates. Arrived at the cemetery the coffin was placed on the lawn at the entrance. Then several of the mourners, removing their shoes, conducted a short form of service, after which the coffin and mourners were photographed by an Indian student. The body was carried to the graveside and lowered by a party of the mourners. Nobody who was not directly concerned with the ceremony was allowed within 25 yards of the grave 22 04 21

1922 09 16

The condition of Mill Road Cemetery for long past has not been creditable to a town like Cambridge. The Borough Cemetery is a delightful flower garden compared to the Mill Road Cemetery which is an amalgamation of the parish churchyards. Some parts of the cemetery are well tended, others are dreary wastes whose evidence of neglect have now been removed by the unemployed at the expense of the ratepayers. The question is whether these reclaimed spaces are again to be permitted to run wild. No church which lets its graveyards get into the deplorable state of the Mill Road Cemetery can be truly described as a live church 22 09 16 [1.7]

1925

1925 11 04

Sir – if all the grumblers would combine to get the custodian of the Histon Road cemetery, Cambridge, a better wage they would do some real good. Each man begins cheerfully and willingly, but how can he be expected to keep a good heart and pay for auxiliary labour out of a 25s. wage. Every man who had taken the job has gone out owning himself beaten by a starvation wage. I heard one say he had to buy his own grass-cutting machine and bedding-out plants. Even with a house thrown in the job appears to be more a 'man-trap' than cemetery. – 'Anti-Fat' 25 11 04

1926

1926 10 26

The Imperial War Graves Commission has undertaken on behalf of the Belgian Government to erect headstones over the graves of deceased members of the Belgian Forces in various cemeteries, including Cambridge. They will be made in Belgium and forwarded to this country for erection. There are two graves of Belgian soldiers in the Cambridge Borough Cemetery, two bodies being interred in each grave, and permission was given for the erection of the headstones 26 10 26

1935

1935 05 14

Cambridge General Cemetery Company asked that the Corporation take over control of the Histon Road Burial Ground which was established nearly 100 years ago by a private company. There are still a number of private grave spaces available for burials and it would be in the public interest. This was agreed 35 05 14

Please make what use of this you may. Kindly remember where it came from – www.mikepetty.org.

1936

1936 01 29

Arrangements have been made with the Cambridge General Cemetery Company for the Histon Road Cemetery to be transferred to the Borough Council as from February. The cottage, chapel and old mortuary required considerable repairs, the paths regravelled and the grounds cleared up. The cottage should be made habitable for a man to live there and have general charge of the ground, a report recommended. 36 01 29a

1936 10 13

Crematorium proposed design – 36 10 13a

1936 10 16

Councillors had considered the erection of a municipal crematorium before 1900 and earmarked a piece of land at the cemetery on Newmarket Road. Now a private company had come forward and it was time to act. It would cost £12,000, including land, a chapel, furnace and accessories together with a garden of rest. Running costs were extraordinarily low. Quite half the senior members of the University who died were cremated and it would soon pay for itself. 36 10 16

1936 11 14

Trumpington petition for faculty to have plain marble kerb to enclose grave – 36 11 14

1936 12 10

Private crematorium at Barton turned down – protest – 36 12 10h

1937

1937 03 24

When the Salvation Army first came to Cambridge Ellis Merry gave them what was then his wash-house in which to hold their meetings. He was one of the early sergeant-majors and associated himself with their work in the villages, using a concertina and violin to good effect. He was the first to run a penny bus, from Mill Road into town and also did the horse mail work. Until his retirement Mr Merry carried on the business of undertaker. 37 03 24c

1937 10 29

Cambridge & Counties Crematorium Ltd was incorporated on 8th June 1936 to establish a crematorium on an attractive site on the main Huntingdon Road with a chapel, incinerating chambers, columbaria for the reception of urns and waiting rooms. The Borough Council have decided not to proceed with a Municipal Crematorium so this will be the only one within 50-60 miles and has every prospect of success. The Company's revenue will consist not only of fees for cremations but also for the storage of urns and for niches. Shares are now available – advertisement 37 10 29a & b

1938

1938 06 16

The Bishop told the clergy he had money to make Mill Road cemetery chapel more dignified and beautiful. He would ask an architect to prepare plans. The chapel was used from time to time and more funerals might be held there. But it was felt that as so few burials took place, it was not worth the expenditure. It was extremely damp, there was no heating, it was difficult to ring the bell and it was such an ugly building it could never be made beautiful. But it was too drastic to close it altogether 38 06 16a & b

1938 12 16

The Bishop of Ely spoke in favour of cremation at the opening of the Cambridge Crematorium: it overcame the difficulty of overcrowded cemeteries and the danger of water pollution which might arise from earth burial – 38 12 16a, b Advert 38 12 17c [1.4]

1939

1939 03 25

Mill Road cemetery chapel to be decorated by Reginald Hallwood – 39 03 25

1939 04 01

Mill Road cemetery chapel has been redecorated and a dedicatory service was conducted by the Bishop of Ely who said he was very keen about cemetery chapels, some of which were in a very sorry condition. Before this chapel was redecorated it was much better than some others. It is exceptional for a cemetery chapel to be inspiring and uplifting; they should be beautiful and eloquent of the Christian faith. He thanked the decorators for their work and a collection was taken in aid of the fund for the readornment of the chapel. 39 04 01a

1944

1944 05 25

Madingley cemetery dedication, famous service chiefs present – 44 05 25a, 44 05 30a, 44 05 31a

1944 06 02

U.S. Military cemetery dedicated. Memorial Day - the day when Americans pay special honour to their dead - was marked in Cambridgeshire on Tuesday, with a service at the U.S. Military Cemetery (at Madingley). High ranking officers of the American and British Armies, as well as the R.A.F. were present together with leading civic representatives of the Eastern Region and the Town, University and County of Cambridge. A detachment of the British Legion, with their colours, members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the British Red Cross Society, and members of the W.V.S., who have undertaken to provide flowers for the chapel, were also among the large gathering. Centrepiece of the service was a small grass mound, rising from which flew the Stars and Stripes. The Bishop of Ely (Edward Wynn) walked to the mound from the little chapel, followed by the senior officers carrying wreaths. The ceremony opened with an invocation, followed by a scripture reading and a prayer for the fallen. An Order of the Day was read from the Allied commander-in-chief (Gen Eisenhower). During the service either by accident or design three Fortresses flew low over the company. Official and private wreaths were laid and the proceedings came to a close with the National Anthems of America and Britain, the Benediction by the Bishop of Ely and finally "Taps" by two buglers. 44 06 02 CIPof

1948

1948 12 11

Council debate take-over of crematorium [1.1]

1948 03 03

Several hundred people gathered round the flagstaff at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery for a simple service of benediction. The reason for the service was emphasised by the long rows of empty, tarpaulin -covered caskets bear the scene of the service - the caskets in which will be returned to the United States the remains of those American service men and women buried at the cemetery whose relatives wish their last resting-place to be at home. For this reason the cemetery is to be closed for a period, and for the purpose too of reburial of the bodies of those interred in the now-to-be -closed Brookwood and Lisnabrenny (Northern Ireland) American Military Cemeteries whose relatives wish them to rest in England

1949

1949 07 06

Cambridge borough council have applied to borrow £25,000 for the purchase of the crematorium in Huntingdon Road. In 1936 the council took active steps towards building a crematorium on their own site, but, in the meanwhile the Cambridge and County Crematorium Company had been formed and they were talking steps to build their own crematorium. The demand for cremations had increased and there was every indication it would continue to do so. The figures for the Cambridge crematorium had increased for 228 in 1941 to 421 in 1948 49 07 06

1951

1951 08 01

Members of the armed forces, the church and hundreds of relatives, totalling more than 1,000, gathered at the Cambridge city cemetery to do honour to the men and women buried in the special Air Forces plot. A Stone of Remembrance was unveiled by Marshall of the R.A.F., Lord Tedder and blessed by the Bishop of Ely. Training aircraft flew over the cemetery in formation 51 08 01

1954

1954 06 02

Mill Road cemetery chapel dismantled [1.3 – CDN 54 06 02 p6]

1960s *The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date*

1960

1960 12 19

Weyman Funeral Service whole-page advertisement – 60 12 19

1961

1961 03 24

American Military Cemetery superintendent – 61 03 24a

1962

1962 10 18

Mill Road cemetery gravestones – 62 10 18

1981

1981 03 12

A basic funeral is likely to cost £300 – that is 10 times the death grant. It includes £58 for a cremation and service, not including an organist or any memorials. Burial can work out cheaper, because if a family buy a grave it can be used for two or three people. At Cambridge the charge for land is going up 50% to £75 and there is a charge of £40 for opening the grave and burial. Things are cheaper in the villages where local people have a right to be buried in the parish churchyard without buying the land, if there's space. 81 03 12

1986

1986 11 06

Crematorium history – 86 11 06